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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine what beliefs secondary school students held about reading and to compare those beliefs with a set of elementary school teachers' beliefs identified by G. Duffy and W. Metheny. Three hundred high school students from freshman, junior, and senior social studies classes completed a revised version of the 45-item instrument used by Duffy and Metheny. The items represented five conceptual approaches to reading instruction: (1) basal text, (2) linear skills, (3) interest, (4) natural language, and (5) integrated whole. The first two categories indicate a structured approach to reading instruction; the last three, an unstructured approach. Analysis of responses indicated that student beliefs about reading were characterized by three concerns: getting meaning, receiving skill instruction, and interacting with the teacher in the learning environment. Comparison of student beliefs with the identified teacher beliefs showed partial agreement in the unstructured area. The findings suggest that students possessed well-defined conceptions of reading and that some unanimity existed between their beliefs and those of elementary school teachers. (The instrument used in the study is appended.)
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KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS OF READING BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

The role of beliefs and attitudes in affecting behavior and subsequent performance has intrigued psychologists and educators concerned with the "modus operandi" of learning for many years. Thorndike (1913) recognized the importance of the learner's set or attitude in producing behavior when he postulated his Law of Effect. He stated:

> The principle that in any external situation, the responses made are the products of the set or attitude of the animal, that the satisfyingness or annoyingness produced by a response is conditioned by that attitude, and that the successful response is by the law of effect connected with that attitude as well as with the external situation in general. Any process of learning is conditioned by the mind's set. (p.13)

The implications of this statement for the teaching of reading are profound. Foremost, is the assumption that a mind set or body of beliefs about reading exists in the mind of the student. Parallelling this is the corresponding premise that a set of beliefs about reading also exists for the teacher. Just what these beliefs are make up the content of the set. This writer intends to explore the contents of these two sets as they relate to reading.

Statement of the Problem

This study addresses itself to two questions. First, what conceptions do students have about reading. Secondly, do students conceive of reading in the same way that teachers think about reading.

Importance of the Study

The literature of reading is replete with definitions of what reading is, but little is known about teachers' conceptions of what reading is and even less is known about the beliefs of students.

Recently, the beliefs teachers have about reading and reading instruction have come under scrutiny. Belli et al (1977) conducted a review of the literature on teachers' concerns and beliefs about reading and reading instruction as part of an ongoing study (CORP, Institute for Research on Teaching, Michigan State University) that is investigating teaching practices and pupil outcomes in reading instruction. Kling (1977) in establishing the "raison d'etre" of a paper collating resources for reading teachers tied the need for teachers to have a thorough knowledge of the field to the issue of accountability. California's Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (Belli et al, 1977) has been examining the views of classroom teachers about pretraining preparation and instruction in reading. Increasing concern with what constitutes effective teaching seems to point to the need

to assess what classroom teachers actually believe about reading as the next step in understanding and improving teacher performance.

Equally important is how students' conceive of reading. Existing studies have been limited. What teachers know about their students' concepts of reading is uncertain. The findings of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Belli et al, 1977) suggest that teachers and others as yet have failed to adequately comprehend how their students approach reading. This apparent inadequacy emphasizes the need to examine these beliefs if we are to provide classroom instruction tailored to student needs and progress.

Current theories of the teacher's function in the classroom stress the relationship between teacher and student in facilitating learning. Rogers (1969) describes effective teaching in this manner: "the facilitation of significant learning rests upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitator and the learner." Implicit in this supposition is that the key to facilitation is sharing. Thus, while questions and answers concerning concepts are basic to Rogerian theory, it is the extent of the sharing that is crucial to the theory's viability. This study aims to lend support in this area.

In summary, it is hoped that the questions posed by this writer will further understanding of how students and

teachers conceive of reading and shed some light on the congurency or lack of congurency that exists between them.

Definition of Terms

Beliefs in this study are subsumed to be the five conceptual categories identified by Duffy and Metheny (1978). They are as follows: basal text, linear skills, interest-based, natural language, and integrated curriculum models.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study are those imposed by the sample, the instrument, and the statistical analysis used. Use of a heterogeneous sample obviated distinguishing among factors inherently present in the group. These included the cognitive abilities of the subjects, their emotional attitudes, vocational interests, age, sex, and grade level. Consequently, the ability of the study to assess student beliefs about reading is limited by the extent to which it measures factors other than beliefs that are operating on the students. Comparability of the results to those of other studies is restricted to studies whose samples are similarly constructed.

The ability of the instrument to evaluate student beliefs is likewise restricted. The beliefs assessed are confined to those identified in the five sub scales categorized by Duffy and Metheny (1978). Other beliefs are not assessed.

An additional limitation of the instrument results from

the use of a Likert scale which confines a response to one of five options. The tendency of some respondents to select the middle option is a weakness of the scale. The extent to which this option is exercised inhibits the ability of the instrument to identify student beliefs.

The need to establish a critical basis for item selection in factor analysis restricts the number of possible items loading on one factor. Selection of items is limited to those that satisfy a criterion, thus, items not meeting the criterion are eliminated. In the case of this study, a value of (>.28) operates as the selection criterion. Items not achieving this value are not identified.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The notion that teachers and students share beliefs about reading has not been investigated. Studies that exist have been limited to probes of student beliefs or teacher beliefs about reading. Studies most closely related to the topic of reading beliefs are: a) studies directed at uncovering teachers' attitudes and beliefs about reading and reading instruction, b) studies investigating content teachers' beliefs about reading instruction, and c) studies that examine student attitudes and beliefs concerning reading.

Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes

CORP (Conceptions of Reading Project, Institute for Research on Teaching, Michigan State University) sponsored several projects related to teacher conceptions about reading. Under their aegeis, Belli et al (1977) addressed themselves to the status of research in the field. They surveyed current areas of teacher concern in reading culled from 64 references spanning a decade. The concerns noted were extracted by examining the views: reported or expressed by teachers in studies, revealed indirectly by studies

of student performance or attitudes, and suggested by studies of teacher behavior. Major concerns of teachers which surfaced in the studies were: teacher dissatisfaction with training and preparation, and teacher concern with the techniques and mechanics of classroom instruction, such as, individualized instruction, motivation, classroom management, handling ability levels, and selecting materials. The review also pointed to weaknesses in teacher perceptions, notably, the lack of understanding on the part of many teachers of how their students learn and the limited conception of many teachers concerning the reading process. Belli et al (1977) concluded that the bulk of the studies indicate that teachers want to provide competent reading programs for their students but may be handicapped by a lack of knowledge of the reading process. Major criticisms of the review focused on common weaknesses shared by many of the studies surveyed. These included the lack of a conceptual base, the use of select samples not representative of the teacher population, and the neglect of contrast groups which made it difficult to compare or generalize about results. In addition, the reviewers pointed to the absence of primary research in the field making a case for the need for research directed toward investigating the conceptual base of teachers of reading.

Duffy's study (1977) of teacher conceptions about reading

is a preliminary report of one aspect of a study sponsored by CORP to investigate the relationship of teachers' belief systems to instructional practices and pupil outcomes. Its purpose was to determine whether teacher conceptions influence instructional decision making by observing teachers as they work. The eleven teachers participating in the study were selected on the basis of the congruency of their response on the Proposition Sort (a 35 item inventory of teacher beliefs) and the Kelly Rep Test or by nomination. Beliefs were categorized into one of three systems: a structured view representing basal or linear skill categories, an unstructured view consisting of natural language, interest, integrated whole categories, and a non-categorizable view. Data provided by the first cycle of observations based on field notes, suggested that there was a possible tie in between belief and practice. Of the eight teachers who demonstrated strong beliefs on the screening instruments, four displayed practices which consistently reflected their beliefs. The other four teachers were found to operationalize their beliefs some of the time, two of these were functioning within an imposed administrative program reflecting a view different than their own. Of the three teachers who professed no defined belief system, two were found to display practices reflecting a structured view while one could not be identified as following a set

instructional pattern. Duffy concluded that the tentative results projected by the field study question the degree to which teacher practice reflects belief. However, the naturalistic design of the study raises some questions itself about the objectivity of the data collected and leaves some questions of how observations were conducted unanswered. For instance, what were the special characteristics of the observer and how consistent was the observer in taking field notes? Have differences among observers been accounted for since the eleven subjects were not evaluated by the same observer? Was there an established framework for taking field notes since the use of a preconstructed observation instrument was rejected?

Barr and Duffy (1978) focused on the evolution of the CORP project investigating the relationship of teacher beliefs to instructional patterns. They noted that the CORP project assumed that a linear relationship existed between a teacher's beliefs about reading, instructional practices, and pupil outcomes. Findings generated by the ten teachers participating in the field study challenged this hypothesis. They revealed that some teachers do not have strong conceptions, that circumstances can alter teacher conceptions and that most teacher behavior reflects a combination of views. Further, they indicated that outside factors may have as great an influence on teaching practices

as reading conceptions. As a result, the observed discrepancy between formalized views of teacher conceptions and teacher practices led CORP to reject the view of teacher conceptions as reflecting a codified belief system of reading. Instead, they theorized that a teacher's conception of reading represented a set of principles used by teachers to make classroom decisions. This conceptual shift in the study led to the formulation of a new set of questions, namely: whether teachers possess conceptions, how instructional and administrative mandates influence teacher beliefs, how do teachers' conceptions affect students, and do experience and training affect teacher conceptions?

To do this, CORP established three stages for analyzing data: observing each teacher individually and using the data to predict future behavior, establishing factors of decision making common to the ten teachers as a basis for comparing the teachers, and using the relationship of the teachers to the common factors to infer a teacher's conception of reading. Results of this restructuring led Barr and Duffy to formulate a number of hypotheses about teacher conceptions based on teacher observation. They found that the overlapping of conceptions, the multi-dimensional nature of teacher conceptions and the fact that teachers will change views according to the grade level or ability of the students indicated the complexity of teacher conceptions

about reading. They suggested that teacher beliefs do affect some aspects of classroom practice, namely, the selection of materials and the help given students during reading. They also believed that the relationship of belief to practice may be conditioned by the following institutional constraints: imposed time schedule, testing program, class composition, and restrictions on materials. Their conclusions did not deny Duffy's (1977) earlier inference that there is a tie between belief and practice, but rather recognized that it was not as operationally clear cut as first imagined. Noticeably, the findings were based on observations of teachers at the elementary level. It is interesting to speculate whether similar findings would be generated by observations of teachers at the junior and senior high levels. Barr and Duffy have alluded to the possibility of differences existing in their reference to grade level and ability as possible variables influencing teacher conceptions and practice.

Further work by Duffy and associates (Duffy and Metheny, 1978) led to the development of an instrument to measure teacher conceptions about reading. The instrument, named The Propositional Inventory, consisted of 45 items representing five conceptual approaches to reading instruction: basal text, linear skills, interest, natural language and integrated whole. Using the instrument, Duffy and Metheny assessed 178 graduate and undergraduate teachers at Michigan

State University. Results led them to conclude that teacher beliefs could be identified with one of two categories: structured or unstructured. Duffy and Metheny based their decision on the factor loadings obtained from a two factor analysis of the five reading sub-scales using a varimax rotation. The loadings reported in the Two Factor Matrix of Reading Sub-scales were: .74 interest, .74 integrated whole, and .67 integrated language on Factor I and .49 basal text, and .93 linear skills on Factor II. However, a three factor analysis of individual scale items using a varimax rotation indicated that teachers with a structured approach made more distinctions. For instance, items representing the reading sub-scales of interest, natural language, and integrated whole loaded on Factor I while items representing the basal text approach loaded strongly on Factor III and those representing linear skills on Factor II. Basal text and linear skill items shared some variation between Factors II and III.

Mitchell, Anders and Meredith (1978) investigated the relationship of teaching experience to teacher beliefs and abilities concerning reading. Their subjects comprised 355 teachers and prospective teachers enrolled in reading courses at the undergraduate and graduate level. They were tested in three areas: attitudes toward reading (Mikulecky Behavioral Reading Attitude Measure), attitudes

toward the teaching of reading (Vaughn Attitude Inventory), and reading achievement (Nelson - Denny Reading Test). Results indicated that teachers having the most experience achieved the highest mean scores in reading achievement and attitude measures. Overall score differences between groups suggested that a positive relationship existed between the degree of experience and achievement and attitudes. However, the authors noted the need for research to validate these findings because of the limitations inherent in the study. These included: the small number of subjects comprising the most experienced group (17), the special characteristics of the sample studied (all university enrolled), and the lack of discrimination among some subgroups. Surprisingly, Barr and Duffy (1978) did not mention experience as a factor in influencing teacher conceptions about reading in the classroom. If experience is to be considered as a possible factor in shaping teacher conceptions, then other questions concerning the pool of experienced teachers need to be considered. These include the characteristics of the experienced group and the role of attrition in creating the most experienced group.

Concern with the interest or lack of interest shared by content teachers concerning the teaching of reading led Anders and Mitchell (1978) to compare the reading achievement, habits, attitudes, and reading perceptions of

elementary teachers with those of secondary teachers. The subjects selected included various secondary school teachers and elementary teachers attending classes to fulfill certification requirements. Comparisons were based on the data collected by administering The Nelson-Denny Reading Test, the Mikulecky Behavioral Reading Attitude, The Vaughn Attitude Inventory, and a modified Burke Reading Interview utilizing two questions. Analysis of the data revealed that there were statistically significant differences between teaching levels for the Nelson-Denny sub-tests and total test while there were no significant differences between or among teachers on the attitude measures. Responses to the first Burke question suggested that both groups shared similar perceptions about reading while answers to the second question (Are you a good reader?) produced different responses between teaching levels. Fifty-eight percent of secondary teachers and forty-eight percent of elementary teachers considered themselves to be good readers. Eighteen percent of secondary school teachers and thirty-one percent of elementary teachers ranked themselves as fair readers. Reports of not being a good reader were admitted by twenty-one percent of elementary teachers and by twenty-three percent of secondary school teachers. Anders and Mitchell concluded that the various data suggested that there were no differences between elementary and secondary

school teachers' reading habits or their desire to teach reading in the content area. They surmised that the similarity between the two groups' perceptions of reading may be due to the fact that the two groups were experiencing their first exposure to a reading methods course. Secondary teachers' higher mean scores on The Nelson-Denny Test were interpreted as indicating that secondary teachers may be better readers. The authors suggested that the higher achievement of secondary teachers on The Nelson-Denny Test and the greater incidence of this group reporting themselves to be good readers may be related. However, their findings pertaining to the two groups' perceptions of reading need to be re-examined. The question used to evaluate a teacher's perception of reading (When you come to something you don't know, what do you do?) seems task specific and may not adequately measure teacher perceptions. Moreover, they seem to contradict the recent findings of Barr and Duffy (1978) who found that grade level affected teacher conceptions of reading.

Predating that of Mitchell, et al (1978), Mikulecky and Ribovich's study (1977) was confined to a more homogenous group of 149 pre-service teachers not differentiated by experience. Among their conclusions was the determination that no relationship appeared to exist between the variables of sex, teaching level, or final grades and reading achieve-

ment and attitude. However, a relationship did appear to exist between reading achievement and attitude. Similar findings have been reported by Johns (1974) among elementary students and suggested by Bruckerhoff (1977) in his study of high school students. In contrast to the Mikulecky and Ribovich study, Anders and Mitchell (1978) found that a relationship did exist between teaching level and reading achievement. The difference in the two findings may be due to the fact that the subjects in the Mikulecky and Ribovich study were not practicing teachers, so that teaching level may actually mean intended teaching level.

Content Teachers Beliefs and Attitudes

Lately, interest in the attitude and competency of subject teachers to teach reading skills has been receiving attention. Earlier, Otto (1968) examined the attitudes of secondary school teachers toward the teaching of reading via an inventory he designed. The inventory consisted of fourteen items arranged in a Likert scale. Its intent was to probe four areas of teacher perceptions: role of the subject teacher in teaching reading in the content areas, role of the reading specialist at the secondary level, felt ability of the subject to teach reading, and attitude of the subject teacher toward teaching a reading skill. It was administered

to 87 teachers (37 junior high school teachers, 49 senior high school teachers) not enrolled in a reading program. The data collected was used to provide a basis for comparing junior and senior high school teachers' reading attitudes and to obtain a general survey of teacher attitudes. Analysis of the responses indicated that junior high teachers as a group were more tolerant of elementary students' reading deficiencies than were senior high teachers. When presented with the statement: "Students should know what there is to know about reading before they are permitted to leave elementary school", 66% of the senior high teachers agreed while only 39% of junior high teachers felt the same way. Otto also discerned a number of trends among the responses. For instance, over 60% of all the teachers disagreed with the statement: "Secondary school teachers can teach reading effectively without special university courses in methods of teaching reading." Another response item: "Content area teachers in the secondary school are probably more competent to teach the reading skills needed for their subjects than special reading teachers", produced a similar reaction. Otto inferred that secondary teachers generally recognized the need for reading instruction to continue at the secondary level, but did not feel equipped to do the job themselves without some training. Admittedly, the small sample of teachers and their location in a single school

district precludes making generalizations about the study. Nevertheless, Otto's observations are interesting. They support the findings of Belli, et al (1977) which cited the feeling of professional inadequacy experienced by many elementary teachers when confronted with the task of teaching reading skills.

Olson (1969) decided to evaluate the extent to which teachers felt they were teaching reading skill development. Five hundred and eighty-five junior and senior high school teachers encompassing seven content areas participated in the study. They were presented a list of twenty reading related practices and told to check the response that best described how they felt about the practice. In reporting data for five of the items, Olson found a number of inconsistencies in the teachers' self-appraisal. In response to one item, all but one group of subject teachers (foreign language) felt that they almost always selected material compatible with the student's reading ability. Yet, in response to another item, a majority of the teachers reported that they only sometimes or seldom never provided other materials for students who were unable to handle the regular textbooks. In addition, the responses of teachers to two other items indicated that most teachers felt that they were doing a good job of differentiating instruction for students and most said they almost always knew the

reading level of the textbook being used. Interestingly, when queried as to how they knew the reading level of the text, Olson noted that most of the teachers indicated that they secured the information from the publisher. Perhaps the contradictions Olson noted are not inconsistencies in practice, but rather inconsistencies between belief (what teachers think they should do) and practice (what teachers found they were able to do) as described by Barr and Duffy (1978). In reporting on another item indicating what teachers can do, Olson revealed that 57% of vocational teachers and 48% of social studies teachers admitted they only sometimes or seldom never knew the reading skills required for their subject. While not enough is known about the special characteristics of the sample surveyed to generalize about content teachers, the study does pose questions about the level of awareness of secondary school teachers toward reading and reading instruction. Specifically, are the feelings expressed by subject teachers toward teaching skills in their field based on the recognition of specific skill weaknesses or strengths of their own or do they represent a generalized impression?

Braam and Walker (1973) probed subject teachers' awareness of reading skills by the use of a questionaire. Their study replicated an earlier one encompassing 16 schools and 9 subject areas but was differentiated from the earlier

study by the inclusion of principals and reading teachers in the survey. The subjects were asked to specify: which important reading skills were needed by students in their subject, in which of these skills the students were the strongest, and in which of these skills the students were the weakest. They were also asked to give a yes or no answer to three questions: one related to teacher training and two pertaining to reading programs in the school. Responses to the questionaire indicated that the skills listed as most necessary were: comprehension, vocabulary, critical reading, study skills, locating information, reading rate, word analysis, oral reading, spelling, and reading for details. As noted in the previous study, comprehension remained the most important skill. In terms of skill awareness, each respondent averaged 2.44 skills as needed to read material in his subject, 0.96 skills as those best developed in their students and 1.63 skills as the skills least developed in their students. Differences in responses were reported between subject teachers and reading teachers. Notably, reading teachers classified word analysis as a competency area of students and considered students to be more deficient in critical reading than did subject teachers. Further, reading teachers listed more skills required in content areas than did principals or subject teachers. Principals in turn listed more skills than did subject

teachers. In interpreting the data, Braam and Walker concluded that there still seems to be considerable difference between the reading perceptions of content teachers and those of the reading teacher. While subject teachers seem to be more aware of their students' weaknesses than strengths, they seem unaware of the majority of skills needed to read competently. As an explanation, the authors proferred that there seems to be no improvement in communication between reading experts and classroom teachers and point to a slight decline in the number of content teachers reporting training in reading as compared to the earlier Braam study. The conclusions suggested by Braam and Walker may be misleading. Generally speaking, the use of open-ended questions elicits a global response from the respondent which may not adequately reflect the full dimensions of one's perceptions. This may account for the paucity of skills reported per respondent. On the other hand, this type question does serve to bare those perceptions most operative in the teacher's belief system. This was evidenced in the greater number of skills reported by the reading specialists in the study.

Student Beliefs and Attitudes

The paucity of information dealing with how students think about reading presents a problem. For the most part,

existing studies concerning student perceptions of reading refer to students at the elementary level. Belli, et al (1977) cited the work of Downing (1969) and Johns (1971, 1972) as examples of exploratory probes in this area.

An interesting study reported by Johns (1974) compared the concepts of reading reported by children classified as good readers with those considered to be poor readers. The 103 fourth and fifth grade students surveyed in this sample were interviewed individually and asked: "What is reading?" They were also tested with the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test. Based on their grade placement score, students achieving a year or more below were defined as poor readers. Results indicated a significant difference in the way good and poor readers perceived reading. The poor reader could not define reading, gave vague answers, or perceived it as a classroom activity. The good reader associated reading with recognizing words, providing meaning and understanding, and recognizing words and meaning. Clearly, Johns (1974) raised some interesting questions about the formulation and development of students' conceptions concerning reading. Downing's work (1969) with children at the primary level tied early conceptions of reading to cognitive development. Johns (1974) has indicated that good students at the upper elementary level hold definite views about what reading is in contrast to

poor readers. What about the views of older students? Are they similarly differentiated?

Like Johns (1974), Nielson's study (1977) examining the attitudes of students toward reading dealt with students at the upper elementary level. She was also concerned with the effects of grade level, reading achievement, sex, race, and social status upon reading attitudes. Four measures were utilized in conducting the study: The Estes Reading Scale, to measure attitude toward reading; The Diehl Reading Attitude Scale, to determine attitude toward 25 reading related concept; The Metropolitan Achievement Test, to measure reading ability and The Two Factor Index of Social Position, to gauge social status. A total of 260 fourth and sixth graders were selected randomly from three elementary school districts to serve as subjects. They were categorized as: suburban upper and middle class, inner city, and suburban middle and lower class. The three schools were selected on the basis of a varied racial pattern: predominately white, predominately black, and a nearly equal ratio of black and white. In all, the sample comprised 125 boys and 135 girls. Results indicated that girls had a more favorable attitude toward reading and reading related concepts than boys. The most positive attitudes toward reading were reported for students achieving above grade level. The attitudes of students reading at grade

level were reported as more positive than those achieving below grade level. A significant difference was also found among the attitude of the three achievement groups toward reading related concepts. Again the attitude score of the most successful group was more positive than that of the other two groups. No other comparisons were found to be significant and no differences were found to exist between the attitudes of fourth and sixth grade students. Nielson inferred that student attitude may affect a student's reading achievement and his voluntary reading. It could also be argued that reading achievement may shape and alter student attitude towards reading. Nevertheless, like Johns (1974), Nielson's study suggested that the most successful student readers have a better understanding of reading than the less successful students have.

Bruckerhoff (1977) was concerned with the experiences that help to create feelings students have about reading. His study involved approximately 10% of a total high school population who were selected randomly to represent a cross section of students comprising both sexes, all grades, all subject areas, and all ability levels. The students were asked to respond to three questions: a) What had any of their teachers done to promote their competency and interest in reading? b) What had any of their teachers done to detract from their interest in reading? and c) Was there

someone or something outside of school that contributed to their ability and interest? Responses to the questionaire were analyzed from two vantage points: the first considered the students' answers collectively, categorizing them by content area; the second considered the answers to each of the three questions separately. In the first analysis, Bruckerhoff noted a difference in the quality and quantity of the responses. Students taking more academic subjects tended to write responses that included several experiences for each question. In contrast, vocational students' answers were often brief giving a "no," "none," or "nothing" and they frequently omitted answering a question. Of this group, 6% answered "no" to the first question, and 9% answered "no" to the second question. Bruckerhoff interpreted the low percentage of "no" answers to the first and second questions as suggesting that these students were making a substantial statement about what teachers did or did not do to build good feelings about reading. In examining individual responses, he noted that the answers supported methods of reading instruction proven effective in the past while answers to the second question delineated the abuses connected with teaching practices. Among those experiences mentioned by the students as supporting reading were: the teacher's interest in the student, the enthusiasm of the

teacher for reading, allowing students freedom to select their books, providing students free time for reading, visits to the library, availability of paper backs in the classroom, and talking over what is read. On the other hand, most criticism was vented toward making book reports... especially an excessive number of reports, forced oral reading, and grouping by ability in which students felt discouraged and intimidated by their peers. Bruckerhoff inferred that the negative experiences were the outgrowth of assignment excesses and teacher inattention to what students could do while he construed the positive experiences to reflect successful personal communication between the teacher and the student. Responses to the third question indicated that 42% of the students identified family members (especially mothers) as influencing their competence and interest in reading. Others mentioned individual siblings, friends, and time in the library, as positive influences. While most of the "nothing" responses in this category came from students in non-academic areas, Bruckerhoff did not suggest that 58% of the students' families did no reading in their homes. Rather, he construed the response as an indication that little reading activity goes on in the home. In assessing the Bruckerhoff study, it is important to recognize that the subjective nature of the questionaire did not allow a true measure of agreement

among students. Nevertheless, the results did identify certain methods of reading instruction that students of various levels and abilities within one high school believe to be valuable, and certain practices they believe to be detrimental to reading. They also underscore the role of outside influences in shaping reading perceptions and attitudes.

Summary and Discussion

A major thrust of research in the field of teacher conceptions about reading has been provided by CORP. Beginning with Belli, et al (1977), their investigations focused on the relationship between teacher beliefs and practices. In examining this relationship, Barr and Duffy (1978) described how case studies are being conducted to determine teacher beliefs about reading that can be observed. At present, the results are tentative.

Another aspect of inquiry into teacher conceptions probed for differences among teacher groups in their attitudes and achievement. Mitchell, et al (1978) found that teachers of varying levels of experience differed in their reading achievement and attitudes toward reading. Similarly, Anders and Mitchell (1978) observed that a difference in the reading achievement and self perceptions of teachers concerning reading seemed to exist between teaching levels. In contrast, Mikulecky and Ribovich (1977)

found no distinction between groups of teachers in their investigation of pre-teachers' achievement and attitudes.

Investigations of content teachers focused on teacher attitudes toward the teaching of reading and reading practices. Generally, they involved practicing teachers as subjects rather than inservice teachers (Mitchell, et al 1978), (Anders and Mitchell, 1978). They revealed that: most subject teachers experienced a lack of competence about teaching reading skills in their content areas (Otto, 1968), the level of awareness of most content teachers concerning various reading skills was questionable (Olson, 1969) and that most subject teachers have a limited knowledge of reading skills needed by their students in their subject (Braam and Walker, 1973).

Some studies of students' conceptions about reading raised questions about the origin and development of students' beliefs and attitudes concerning reading. Johns (1974) pointed out that good students at the elementary level hold definite views about what reading is. Bruckerhoff (1977) observed that there seems to be some consensus among high school students about reading practices that work.

This study will distinguish itself from the studies described by:

1. involving a student sample drawn from the content area at the secondary level

2. employing a questionaire that taps the major belief systems concerning reading

3. comparing student responses with identified teacher responses.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

This study is modeled after that of Duffy and Metheny (1978) who conducted a factor analysis of the responses of graduate and undergraduate elementary teachers to an inventory investigating teacher conceptions about reading. It aims to ascertain the beliefs secondary students have about reading and to determine the degree to which these beliefs coincide with teacher beliefs identified by Duffy and Metheny (1978).

Accordingly, this investigation is predicated on two assumptions:

1. that secondary school students hold a specific set of beliefs about reading

2. that there is some agreement between students and teachers about reading and reading instruction.

Method

To determine the beliefs secondary students hold about reading as well as their correspondence with identified teacher beliefs, two analyses were made. The first considered the responses of secondary students to an inventory

probing their beliefs about reading. The second contrasted these findings with those reported by Duffy and Metheny (1978).

Subjects

It was decided to administer the inventory to a group of students not known to this investigator. Permission was obtained to test a major portion of the social studies students at one of the area high schools in Mercer County, New Jersey. The school has a total population of 1300 and a social studies population of approximately 900 students. School figures indicate that 23% of the students come from urban Trenton and 77% from the adjoining townships in Mercer County. Of this group, 12% were classified as minority students.

Since the social studies classes at the high school were grouped hetergenously, three classes each of freshmen, juniors, and seniors were randomly selected from the school roster to serve as subjects. Those chosen were the freshman groups scheduled during odd numbered periods and the junior and senior groups scheduled during even numbered periods. No sophmore groups were involved since less than a dozen sophmores were currently enrolled in social studies classes. The sample totaled 300 students.

Instrument

The instrument selected to assess the students' beliefs

was The Propositional Inventory (Duffy and Metheny, 1978). Pioneered by CORP, the inventory consists of 45 items arranged on a five point Likert scale. The items are intended to represent one of five conceptual categories about reading. Reliability coefficients reported for the sub-scales were as follows: .78 for basal text; .71 for linear skills; .67 for interest-based; .71 for natural language and .62 for integrated curriculum models.

Experiential differences between the prospective target population and those of Duffy and Metheny (1978) suggested that some modifications had to be made in the wording of the original instrument before it could be administered to the students. Suggestions were solicited from eight members of the Social Studies Department at another local high school who were asked to read the inventory. Subsequently, their recommendations were adopted in revising the instrument. (Copies of the original inventory and the revised inventory are in Appendix A and Appendix B.) A readability check using the Fry Graph (Fry, 1977) was performed on the revised scales and a grade level of nine was obtained. (The readability calculations are presented in Appendix C.) Securing a lower grade level would probably have required the division of each item into more than one statement. This writer thought that clarity might best be served if each item remained intact as a

single statement. In this respect, Fry (1977) cautioned against using sentence length as the sole determinant of sentence complexity when interpreting readability levels.

The modified inventory was then tried out on a group of 21 twelfth grade American History students who were considered poor readers. A few days later, September 24 and 25, the revised instrument was presented to the target group. At that time, the subjects were told that their participation in taking the inventory would aid in improving teacher education and that they should base their responses on their experience as a student. The actual time involved in administering the inventory was 30 minutes. Total testing spanned two school days.

Once collected, the completed student inventories were assigned a number. The responses of the numbered inventories were then recorded on a grid sheet. Values from 5 to 1 were assigned the response options. No response was recorded as x.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data were subjected to a principal components factor analysis using the SPSS program.

First eigenvalues and per cent of variance were computed in order to determine the relative strength of the principal factors identified by an analysis of the data. Since Duffy and Metheny (1978) selected three factors to

differentiate among teacher beliefs, it was decided to use three factors as the basis for delineation in this study. A scree test verified that three factors should be extracted from the group of principal factors.

Second, a varimax rotation of the three factors was performed as a means of identifying the contents of the students' belief system and of categorizing the contents. A loading of (>.28) was selected as the criterion for establishing item assignment on a factor since that was the criterion chosen by Duffy and Metheny.

Third, to facilitate a comparison of teacher and student beliefs about reading, the factor location of item loadings reported in the Duffy and Metheny matrix was noted next to the item loading as it appeared in the student matrix.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The questions posed by this study have been concerned with the need to establish the existence of a set of belief entities about reading for secondary school students and to determine the relationship of this set to an identified set of teacher beliefs. In order to respond to these questions, the data generated by the subjects' in this study were used to:

1. identify the important distinctions made in the student belief system
2. identify the items operating in the students' belief system
3. relate identified student beliefs to identified teacher beliefs.

Presentation of Data

Table 1 lists the principal factors which achieved an eigenvalue of 1 or higher and reports the amount of variance ascribed to each factor. The seventeen factors satisfying this criterion accounted for approximately 61% of the total variance reported. Of this group, three factors contributed

TABLE 1

LIST OF PRINCIPAL FACTORS BASED ON EIGENVALUE

Factor	Eigenvalue	Percent of Variance	Cumulative Percent
1	4.70	10.5	10.5
2	2.96	6.6	17.0
3	1.97	4.4	21.4
4	1.65	3.7	25.1
5	1.55	3.4	28.5
6	1.48	3.3	31.8
7	1.44	3.2	35.0
8	1.39	3.1	38.1
9	1.35	3.0	41.1
10	1.29	2.9	44.0
11	1.22	2.7	46.7
12	1.19	2.6	49.3

TABLE 1 (Continued)

LIST OF PRINCIPAL FACTORS BASED ON EIGENVALUE

Factor	Eigenvalue	Percent of Variance	Cumulative Percent
13	1.13	2.5	51.8
14	1.12	2.5	54.3
15	1.07	2.4	56.7
16	1.04	2.3	59.0
17	1.02	2.3	61.3

21.4% to the total variance, an amount proportionately higher than that shared by the other factors. Eigenvalues of 4.70, 2.96 and 1.97 were reported for the first three factors listed. Significantly lower values were presented for the other factors identified in Table 1.

Examination of the distribution of variance exhibited in Table 1 revealed that more than half of the variance accumulated by the first three factors accrued to Factor I. Differences in the total amount of variance ascribed to each of the three factors ranged from 4% to 2%. A minimal amount of difference was evident among the amount of variance reported for each of the other factors listed in Table 1.

Table 2 presents the dispersion of items among three factors as a result of a varimax rotation while the numeral enclosed in parentheses corresponds to the location of the item in Duffy and Metheny's Three Factor Matrix of Scale Items (1978). Each of the items presented in Table 2 loaded on a single factor. An equal number of items loaded on Factors I and II (11) while Factor III received 7 items. Examination of the numeral accompanying each item loading revealed that there was a difference in the placement of items in Table 2 with their location in the Duffy and Metheny matrix. In Table 2, items loaded under Factor I occurred under Factors I, II, and III in the Duffy and Metheny matrix. The same pattern was repeated for items

TABLE 2

ROTATED THREE FACTOR MATRIX OF SCALE ITEMS

Description	Item No.	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
teach for meaning	10	.41 (1) [a]		
teach thinking skills	14	.47 (1)		
material related to speaking	20	.35 (2)		
vocabulary preparation	24	.49 (2)		
use questioning to teach meaning	27	.42 (2)		
skills mastery indicates achievement	28	.30 (2)		
use of reading related activities	29	.36 (1)		
group for comprehension	31	.42 (1)		
teacher as a resource person	32	.38 (3)		
instruction emphasis on meaning	39	.34 (1)		
motivation to read good literature	44	.40 (1)		

TABLE 2 (Continued)

ROTATED THREE FACTOR MATRIX OF SCALE ITEMS

Description	Item No.	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
progress indicated by move to more difficult material	1		.36 (3) [a]	
group by textbook level	11		.34 (3)	
teach phonic skills	12		.32 (2)	
use reading to get information	15		.31 (1)	
follow skills guide	17		.58 (2)	
teach basic skills	25		.54 (2)	
skills mastery related to achievement	28		.34 (2)	
textbook followed	36		.31 (3)	
teach skills step by step	37		.37 (2)	
assignments keyed to the practical value of reading	38		.30 (1)	
reading as a composite of sub-skills	42		.42 (2)	

TABLE 2 (Continued)

ROTATED THREE FACTOR MATRIX OF SCALE ITEMS

Description	Item No.	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
use of instruction time to motivate	19			.53 (1)
grouping based on interest	22			.40 (1) [a]
selection of materials that motivate	30			.44 (1)
participation in free reading	34			.55 (1)
communicative function of reading	35			.43 (1)
interesting materials aid learning	41			.34 (1)
de-emphasize decoding skills	45			.36 (1)

[a] Number in parentheses corresponds to the factor number in the Duffy and Metheny (1978) matrix.

loaded under Factor II. In contrast, the items loaded on Factor III corresponded to items grouped with one factor in the Duffy and Metheny matrix. However, only seven of the twenty-five items grouped under one factor in Duffy and Metheny's matrix reappeared on Factor III in Table 2.

Discussion

Three factors were extracted from the list of principal factors to serve as possible entities in a students' belief system about reading. While the motivation underlying these factors was not explicitly revealed by the data, examination of the item loadings produced by a varimax rotation suggested three possible areas of distinction: getting meaning from written material, receiving skill instruction, and having input in the instructional process. Furthermore, the amount of variance and the size of the eigenvalues reported for the first three factors suggested the existence of a student belief system characterized by three interpretable factors.

Further refinement by Duffy and Metheny (1978) led them to conclude that a teachers' belief system could be categorized by one of two distinctions: structured or unstructured. Included in the structured category were the basal reader approach and the linear skills approach. Findings generated by this study (Table 1) may support a two factor solution to explain the distinctions students made about reading.

However, as the data in Table 2 indicated, students did make discernible distinctions between comprehension, skills proficiency, and student interaction in the instructional environment.

Results of the varimax rotation which parallelled Duffy and Metheny's data provided some insights about the relationship of student and teacher perceptions of reading. Though both rotated solutions exhibited the dispersion of items among three factors, the orientation of the factors differed. The dissimilarity in content manifested by two of the three factors in each study indicated that they represented a different set of distinctions for teacher and student. That students and teachers make different distinctions about reading may be conditioned by their contrasting roles in the learning environment. Duffy and Metheny interpreted a teachers' belief system in terms of an instructional approach. Hence, their analysis defined the distinctions made by teachers as: the basal reader approach, the linear skills approach, and the unstructured approach. The distinctions made by students may represent concerns based on the students' experiences as a reader. As suggested previously, they reflected: concern with comprehending material, concern with receiving skill instruction and concern with being involved in the instructional process.

The partial unanimity demonstrated by Factor III with one factor in the Duffy and Metheny matrix suggested that Factor III may constitute a sub-set of the teacher factor identified by Duffy and Metheny. In other words, the unstructured conception of reading applied by Duffy and Metheny to teachers may include what was inferred in this study as the students' concern with having input in the instructional process.

Agreement with the Literature

Unlike the findings of Johns (1974) and Nielson (1977) which revealed that not all elementary school students have a clear understanding of the goal of reading, this study indicated that students at the secondary level have definite perceptions about reading. It also contrasted with the earlier review of Belli, et at (1977) who inferred that some elementary teachers have a limited understanding of the reading process. Investigators have acknowledged that differences existed in the reading achievement and attitudes of teachers. However, no relationship has been established between teacher reading achievement and teacher understanding of the reading process. Mitchell, et al (1978) reported that teachers having the greatest amount of experience achieved the highest reading scores while Anders and Mitchell (1978) found that secondary teachers achieved higher achievement scores than elementary teachers.

Among the perceptions catalogued by students in this study, was their strong concern with getting meaning which Johns (1974) and Nielson (1977) noted was perceived by only the better students at the elementary level. Another concern, was the interest manifested in participating in activities identified as positive reading experiences by the high school students in Bruckerhoff's study (1977). Apparently, the conviction among students that there should be considerable interaction between teacher and student when reading occurs was not an isolated one. Studies linking this point of view to teacher conceptions are non-existant. Duffy and Metheny's analysis of teacher belief systems indicated that the unstructured approach which included the student sub-set identified in this study was a viable one for teachers.

Student concern with skill instruction has not been documented. However, investigations of teacher attitudes and practices indicated that skill instruction was a concern of many teachers. Much of the concern among elementary teachers reflected feelings of professional inadequacy (Belli, et al 1977). Otto (1968) noted that when confronted with the possibility of teaching reading in their subject area secondary teachers questioned their ability to teach reading skills. Other findings revealed that subject teachers were unaware of the kinds of skills required to teach reading

or to read effectively (Olson 1969), (Braam and Walker 1973) and (Belli, et al 1977). Perhaps student concern in this study with skill instruction was a response to observed teacher weaknesses experienced by the subjects in the classroom. Duffy and Metheny found that skill instruction (linear skills) was recognized as a distinct entity within the set of teacher beliefs about reading.

Summary

Student beliefs identified in this study seemed to reflect the grade levels and maturity of the respondents measured. A younger student sample might have produced different results.

Differences in the roles of student and teacher might have been anticipated to create different distinctions in beliefs about reading between teachers and students. However, the partial agreement noted in this study between students and teachers on one factor seemed to challenge complete adherence to this notion when applied to secondary students.

If anything, the findings suggested that some secondary students have well developed conceptions of reading and that there is some congruence between the existing belief systems of teachers and students.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

At the outset, this study concerned itself with two questions. First, what conceptions do students hold about reading? Second, do students conceive of reading in the same way that teachers think about reading?

A review of the literature found little information about the nature of student conceptions about reading, or of teacher conceptions about reading. Duffy and Metheny's investigation of teacher beliefs suggested the existence of two and possibly three recognizable systems of teacher beliefs. The instrument developed by CORP and used by Duffy and Metheny to investigate teacher belief systems was adopted as an acceptable tool to conduct an inquiry of student beliefs about reading.

Results of the investigation based on 300 student responses to a revised CORP instrument identified three conceptual distinctions made by secondary school students: getting meaning, receiving skill instruction and interacting with the teacher in the reading environment. Comparison of the student belief set with the teacher set

identified by Duffy and Metheny showed partial agreement in one area, namely, the one labeled unstructured.

While tentative, these findings supported the hypotheses that students at the secondary level have well developed, recognizable conceptions about reading, and furthermore, that there was some area of agreement between elementary teachers and secondary school students within the existing set of beliefs. This leads one to speculate what if any correspondence might exist between secondary students and secondary teachers. When one considers that there is some indication that differences exist between elementary teachers and secondary teachers in reading achievement, it becomes provocative.

Though not linking beliefs about reading with student and teacher at the same level, this study has implications for classroom practice. For instance, when contrasted with studies of teacher beliefs and attitudes about reading, it suggests that some secondary students may have a better understanding of the reading process than some teachers. Secondly, it questions whether student expectations about reading instruction may surpass the ability of some teachers to satisfy them. Finally, the agreement between teacher and student concerning less structured modes of instruction indicates that this belief may transcend grade levels. Moreover, it intimates that if a similar correspondence

existed for teachers at the secondary level matching these two groups might produce better results in the classroom.

Unquestionably, the dearth of information about student and teacher conceptions of reading has obfuscated understanding of the motivation behind student behavior and teacher practices in the classroom in the past. If we are seriously concerned with understanding and identifying the beliefs that students and teachers hold about reading, then further probing is needed. Such probes might be directed toward answering some of the questions that have surfaced during this study. To cite a few: Do the beliefs secondary students have about reading vary with ability? with grade level? Conversely, do teachers' conceptions of reading vary with grade level? or student ability? What factors influence the development of student conceptions at various grade levels? teacher conceptions? Can teacher beliefs shape student beliefs and can student beliefs shape teacher beliefs? What effect would teacher understanding of student beliefs have on instruction?

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APPENDIX A

PROPOSITIONS ABOUT

READING INSTRUCTION

PROPOSITIONS ABOUT READING INSTRUCTION

(Duffy and Metheny, 1978)

Directions: For each of the following 45 items, please indicate your level of agreement (or disagreement) by circling one of the five letters. In all cases, A means strongly agree, B agree, C neutral or undecided, D disagree, and E strongly disagree. IMPORTANT: If you cannot decide upon a response to a particular item after 30 seconds, you should circle C for undecided and go on to the next item.

1. I believe that pupil success in reading should be determined primarily by noting progress from easier basal readers to harder basal readers.

   A B C D E

2. I believe that teachers should directly teach the basic skills of reading to those pupils who need them.

   A B C D E

3. I believe that the best reading materials are those which help children solve problems of importance to them.

   A B C D E

4. I believe that an important indicator of reading growth is how often a pupil voluntarily uses reading in his daily life.

   A B C D E

5. I believe that contextual clues are the most important word recognition aids and should receive more instructional emphasis than sight words or phonics.

   A B C D E

6. I believe that basal textbook materials are an important part of good instructional programs in reading.

   A B C D E

7. I believe that primary grade reading should emphasize decoding skills more than comprehension.

   A B C D E

8. I believe that reading success should be measured primarily by noting how well the pupil uses his reading ability for other classroom activities.

A B C D E

9. I believe that the teacher's role is to help children learn to love reading by allowing frequent free reading and by conducting individual book conferences.

A B C D E

10. I believe that reading instruction should focus heavily on comprehension, even at the beginning stages of reading.

A B C D E

11. I believe that an important criteria for grouping pupils is the level basal textbook each is able to read.

A B C D E

12. I believe that all children should be systematically taught to use phonic skills.

A B C D E

13. I believe that the goal of developing comprehension is best achieved by giving pupils realistic reading problems which they see as meaningful in their lives.

A B C D E

14. I believe that reading instruction should emphasize the higher level comprehension processess typically found in good children's literature.

A B C D E

15. I believe that a very important measure of reading success is the degree to which pupils use reading as a communication process.

A B C D E

16. I believe that considerable instructional time should be devoted to conducting guided reading lessons using selections such as those found in basal textbooks.

A B C D E

17. I believe that a carefully structured skills guide should be used when teaching reading to insure that each separate skill is mastered.

A B C D E

18. I believe that reading groups should be formed as the need for them arises and should be disbanded when the need has been met.

A B C D E

19. I believe that we should spend less time teaching pupils how to read and more time in getting them interested in reading.

A B C D E

20. I believe that reading materials should help children learn to read in a natural manner similar to the way they learned to speak.

A B C D E

21. Children who have similar skill deficiencies should be grouped together for instruction.

A B C D E

22. I believe that reading groups should be based on the pupils' interests.

A B C D E

23. I believe that the teachers should spend more instructional reading time on helping children use language as a communication process.

A B C D E

24. I believe that word recognition should emphasize the new vocabulary words associated with each basal text story.

A B C D E

25. I believe that a significant part of a teacher's time should be spent in teaching basic reading skills.

A B C D E

26. I believe that word recognition instruction should not become more important than involving pupils in real-life reading tasks.

A B C D E

27. I believe that comprehension should be taught by asking questions about the basal text story being read.

A B C D E

28. I believe that one effective way to determine pupil reading success is to note how many skills he has learned.

A B C D E

29. I believe that a significant amount of the instructional time in reading should be spent on purposeful, real-life projects and activities which call for the use of reading.

A B C D E

30. I believe that word recognition instruction is not as important in reading as providing children with stimulating, interesting materials to read.

A B C D E

31. I believe that if grouping is used, pupil assignment to groups should reflect more emphasis on meaning cues in reading.

A B C D E

32. I believe that the teacher's role in reading is to assign pupils to appropriate basal materials and direct them as they complete the material.

A B C D E

33. I believe that fewer children would have difficulty learning to read if we stopped teaching reading during self-contained reading periods and, instead, taught it as a part of all subjects.

A B C D E

34. I believe that children should be allowed to choose the stories and books they want to read during the regular reading period.

A B C D E

35. I believe that the teacher's role is to emphasize the communication aspects of reading more than the skills.

A B C D E

36. I believe that a basal text should be used to teach reading.

A B C D E

37. I believe that reading is a difficult process which must usually be taught in a step-by-step sequence if we are to develop good readers.

A B C D E

38. I believe that the teacher's role is to involve pupils in realistic reading tasks which illustrate the functional utility of reading.

A B C D E

39. I believe that reading is not difficult for most children to learn if they are provided with stimulating and lively materials to read.

A B C D E

40. I believe that reading instruction should focus more on the use of meaning cues and less on skill instruction.

A B C D E

41. I believe that I should spend equal amounts of time with the low, middle and high basal text groups.

A B C D E

42. I believe that reading is composed of a series of hierarchical skills which must be taught sequentially and then used in combination if one is to read successfully.

A B C D E

43. I believe that reading instruction should be taught so that pupils can use reading successfully in all cirricular areas.

A B C D E

44. I believe that reading would not be such a problem today if we made greater efforts to interest children in the reading of good children's literature.

A B C D E

45. I believe that too much emphasis is being placed on skills (especially decoding skills) in reading programs today.

A B C D E

APPENDIX B

BELIEFS ABOUT READING

BELIEFS ABOUT READING

(revised version)

Directions: Read the following statements. Please indicate how you feel about each statement by circling one of the five answers given. SA means strongly agree, A agree, U neutral or undecided, D disagree, and SD strongly disagree. If you cannot decide how you feel about a statement after 30 seconds, you should circle U for undecided and go on to the next statement. There are no right or wrong answers.

Practice: Read the statement below. Circle the answer that stands for the way you feel about this statement.

Ex. I believe that students should be given a driver's license as soon as they know how to drive.
SA A U D SD

---

1. I believe that a student's success in reading should be decided mainly by seeing if the student makes progress from easier material to harder material. SA A U D SD

2. I believe that teachers should teach the basic skills of reading to those students who need them. SA A U D SD

3. I believe that the best reading materials are those which help students solve problems that are important to them. SA A U D SD

4. I believe that an important sign of reading growth is how often students use reading on their own. SA A U D SD

5. I believe that being able to use the clues in a sentence to figure out words is the most important skill in reading and should receive more attention than phonics or sight words. SA A U D SD

6.	I believe that textbooks are an important part of good programs in reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
7.	I believe that the beginning reading should emphasize recognizing the printed word more than understanding the printed word.	SA	A	U	D	SD
8.	I believe that reading success should be measured mainly by seeing how well students use reading in other school subjects and activities.	SA	A	U	D	SD
9.	I believe that teachers should help students learn to love reading by allowing a lot of free reading and by having individual conferences to discuss books.	SA	A	U	D	SD
10.	I believe that teachers should pay a lot of attention to reading for meaning even at the beginning stages of reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
11.	I believe that an important guide for teachers to follow in grouping students is the textbook level each is able to read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
12.	I believe that all students should be regularly taught to use phonics skills.	SA	A	U	D	SD
13.	I believe that students can develop the ability to read for meaning if they are given reading problems which they see as important in their lives.	SA	A	U	D	SD
14.	I believe that reading instruction should emphasize the thinking skills needed to read good literature.	SA	A	U	D	SD
15.	I believe that an important measure of reading success is how much students use reading to get information.	SA	A	U	D	SD

16.	I believe that teachers should spend quite a bit of class time on guided reading lessons in which the students read for a specific purpose.	SA	A	U	D	SD
17.	I believe that teachers should follow a skills guide in teaching reading to make sure that each skill is learned by the students.	SA	A	U	D	SD
18.	I believe that teachers should form reading groups when there is a need for them and should break them up when the need has been met.	SA	A	U	D	SD
19.	I believe that the teacher should spend less time teaching students how to read and more time getting them interested in reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
20.	I believe that reading materials should help students to read in a natural way similar to the way they learned to speak.	SA	A	U	D	SD
21.	Students who have the same reading weakness should be grouped together for instruction.	SA	A	U	D	SD
22.	Reading groups should be based on the students' interests.					
23.	I believe that teachers should spend more reading time on helping students use words as a communication process.	SA	A	U	D	SD
24.	I believe that when vocabulary is taught a lot of attention should be given to the new words that appear in each chapter in the textbook.	SA	A	U	D	SD
25.	I believe that an important part of a teacher's time in reading should be spent in teaching basic reading skills.	SA	A	U	D	SD

26.	I believe that teaching students how to pronounce and recognize words should not become more important than involving students in real-life reading activities.	SA	A	U	D	SD
27.	I believe that getting meaning should be taught by asking questions about the material being read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
28.	I believe that one good way to decide how well a student can read is to see how many skills he has learned.	SA	A	U	D	SD
29.	I believe that an important part of the time in reading should be spent on activities which call for the use of reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
30.	I believe that teaching students how to recognize and identify words is not as important in reading as giving students exciting, interesting materials to read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
31.	I believe that if grouping is used, students placed in groups should work on getting meaning from the written material.	SA	A	U	D	SD
32.	I believe that the teacher's job in reading is to assign students to suitable material and guide them as they work on it.	SA	A	U	D	SD
33.	I believe that fewer students would have trouble learning to read if teachers stopped teaching reading as a special subject and, instead, taught it as a part of all subjects.	SA	A	U	D	SD
34.	I believe that students should be allowed to choose the books, magazines, etc., they want to read during the regular reading period.	SA	A	U	D	SD

35.	I believe that the teacher's job is to bring out the communication aspect of reading more than the skills.	SA	A	U	D	SD
36.	I believe that a textbook should be used to teach reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
37.	I believe that learning to read is difficult and must usually be taught step-by-step if students are to become good readers.	SA	A	U	D	SD
38.	I believe that the teacher's job is to give students reading assignments which point out the practical value of reading.	SA	A	U	D	SD
39.	I believe that reading instruction should pay more attention to getting meaning from written material and less on skill instruction.	SA	A	U	D	SD
40.	I believe that the teacher should spend equal amounts of time with the below average, the average, and the above average reader.	SA	A	U	D	SD
41.	I believe that reading is not difficult for most students to learn if they have interesting and lively materials to read.	SA	A	U	D	SD
42.	I believe that reading is made up of a number of skills which must be taught in the right order and then used together if a student is to read successfully.	SA	A	U	D	SD
43.	I believe that reading should be taught so that students can use reading successfully in all subjects.	SA	A	U	D	SD
44.	I believe that reading would not be such a problem today if teachers made greater efforts to interest students in the reading of good literature.	SA	A	U	D	SD

45.	I believe that too much attention is being given to skills (especially pronouncing and recognizing words) in reading programs today.	SA	A	U	D	SD

APPENDIX C

READABILITY CHECK

Readability Check: Beliefs About Reading

	Syllables	Sentences	Items
1st hundred words	146	4.7	1-5
2nd hundred words	148	5.7	19-24
3rd hundred words	147	4.4	41-45
Average	147	4.9	

Readability Level: 9th grade *

* Level obtained when the calculations were applied to the Fry Graph (Fry, 1977).